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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Hopefully, we've seen the last of Mother Nature's last winter hold-outs. After the couple of snowstorms this week, we may see a reprieve and some warmer temperatures return to the area. Early April, and we've seen two snowstorms with accumulating snow already. There's a slight chance that the area will see more snow this weekend, but the percentages of that happening keep dropping. Hey, it's baseball season already - give us a break!

Until next time...

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FireBee Update News

By Fred Horvat

When going through the FireBee Forum on http://atari-forum.com/ I saw that there are two new programs released this week for the Atari computers written and tested on a FireBee. As the announcement of these are elsewhere in this issue of AONE.

First one is NESO which is a Text to HTML converter. More information can be found here : http://peterlane.info/neso.html

Second one is BibFind which lets you search entries in a bibliography written in BibTex .bib format and copy that to a Word Processor or Text Editor using the Clip Board. More information can be found here : http://peterlane.info/bibfind.html

I plan on testing NESO out. I haven t written a bibliography since college and that was many moons ago so I have no .bib files to work with.

Back to my installation of EasyMiNT on the FireBee. I posted my issue on Atari-Forum.com and it appears that the DNS entry in MiNT is not there or not correct. I was instructed to read https://sites.google.com/site/probehouse/networking-the-atari/ethernet-setup-wit

h-ethernec
I looked at the files on the FireBee that I could find and even changed some but still no luck. On the FireBee included FreeMiNT installation there is a Network Configuration program called netconfig.prg located at C:\mint\setup that I plan on running under EasyMiNT and see if that helps.

If that fails I can also start fresh with EasyMiNT and on those two error messages at the start of the installation I may use Google Translate and see exactly what the errors are. It may or may not be related to the networking issues that I am having.

Until next time.

Neso: A Text to HTML Tool

Another little program that may be of interest to writers.

Neso is a text to HTML tool which supports a limited amount of asciidoc syntax. It is written (in AHCC), compiled and tested on the Firebee, using MINT+XaAES.

Below is a screenshot showing the Neso manual being edited in QED, using Asciidoc syntax. The Neso dialog to the bottom right is used to convert the plain text file into html, which is then viewed in Netsurf.

See http://peterlane.info/neso.html for more information and a downloadable zip file.

Peter Lane

Firebee | STE (4Mb, TOS 2.06)

http://peterlane.info/firebee.html

BibFind

I wrote a simple GEM program on the Firebee which might be of interest to writers.

BibFind lets you search for entries in a bibliography written in BibTeX .bib format, and copy them to a word processor or text editor using the system clipboard. BibFind is written for the Atari platform, but currently is only compiled and tested on the Firebee, using MINT+XaAES.

See http://peterlane.info/bibfind.html for more information and a downloadable zip file.

Peter Lane

Firebee | STE (4Mb, TOS 2.06)

http://peterlane.info/firebee.html

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - SCE Now Sony Interactive Entertainment!
Final Fantasy XV's New Demo!
Book Celebrates "Art of Atari"!
And more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Sony Computer Entertainment Has Now Officially
Become Sony Interactive Entertainment

Combining Sony Computer Entertainment and Sony Network Entertainment into one global interactive entertainment powerhouse, Sony Interactive Entertainment officially went live today.

Shawn Layden, the President of Sony Interactive Entertainment America, explained that this changeover won t mean much for gamers in the short term, but it will mean everything in the long run:

The formation of SIE will allow us to forge a unified PlayStation organization that can adapt more quickly to meet the needs of the gaming community, innovate with digital services like PlayStation Vue and PlayStation Now, and above all else drive consistent and constant innovation in the dynamic medium of videogames. You re already seeing the early fruits of that effort with PlayStation VR, and the work will continue across a number of fronts.

Our full integration won t happen overnight. But the work is well underway and I m delighted to report that we are tracking ahead of schedule.

Layden is also a Chairman of Worldwide Studios, where he ll be supporting our excellent first party game development teams and working with Shuhei Yoshida, Scott Rohde, Michael Denny, and Allan Becker. I am committed to building upon our strong heritage to deliver ever more innovative and epic titles, he said, mentioning Uncharted 4: A Thief s End, Horizon Zero Dawn, The Last Guardian, and all of the VR titles they have in development.

Layden finished up by thanking fans for their dedication, adding, The future is surely bright.

Final Fantasy 15’s New Demo Feels Like Kingdom Hearts

A Square Enix representative provided the following statement to IGN:

"We d like to make a comment on the news reports that state Hajime Tabata, Director of Final Fantasy XV, commented that Final Fantasy XV needed to sell 10 million copies to recoup the investment at the press conference held yesterday in LA.

We believe there was a communication problem during the conference. In fact, Tabata was referencing 10 million copies only as a high goal which the development team set to realize their ambition to make the ultimate Final Fantasy game. And the comment was never meant to be referred as a recoup line of the investment."

Original story follows:

According to director, Hajime Tabata, Final Fantasy XV has to sell 10 million copies over its lifespan to make back the money put into the game (presumably as well as its accompanying movie, anime series and mobile games).

As reported by Kotaku UK, Tabata used a press conference to announce the figure. As of last year, the only game in the series to have sold over 10 million copies is Final Fantasy VII, which has sold 11 million across its PlayStation, PSN re-release, PC, and iOS versions.

Final Fantasy XV was recently given a September 30 release date on PS4 and Xbox One, making it more than 10 years between the game’s first announcement (under its original title, Final Fantasy Versus XIII) and its release.

Gears Of War 4 Worldwide Release Date Revealed

It s been a long time coming, but we finally have a launch date for the highly anticipated shooter, Gears of War 4. Gamers will be happy to know that they can expect to shoot and chainsaw their way through the Locust scum this fall.

If you ve been eagerly anticipating any news pertaining to a launch date for Gears of War 4, then today is your lucky day. It has finally been announced through Xbox Wire that the latest game in the Gears series will finally be in our hot little hands on October 11 of this year.

In case you don t have a calendar handy, what that means is that we ve still got six months of anticipation to sweat through before we can finally pick up the tale of muscle-bound heroes

fighting giant, grotesque bug monsters. It s a rough wait, to be sure, but at least you can rest easy knowing that you ll be playing Gears 4 this holiday season, exclusively on Xbox One and PC.

As the original post points out, it s been almost a full year since we first saw Gears of War 4 in action at E3 2015. That means the development team has had plenty of additional time to cook up some gaming epicness for the upcoming title and, with a launch date of Oct. 11, that leaves plenty of additional breathing room to make sure everything is bolted together and ready to roll this fall.

The launch date is, of course, only the first morsel of information to get the Gears 4 hype train moving full steam ahead, with more details promised concerning JD Fenix and his band of new Gears teammates.

The post on Xbox Wire reiterates the fact that Gears 4 is the beginning of a new saga for the series. And with a new cast of heroes will come a new threat in need of a Lancer to the face. The announcement promises an experience that reminds fans of the gritty opening years of the Gears phenomenon, as well as a distinct evolution of gameplay that boast intimate action, a heart-pounding campaign and genre-defining multiplayer. And all of that will be brought to you through the beautifully brutal Unreal Engine 4.

And to get that multiplayer component ready for prime time, the dev team is kicking off a Gears of War 4 beta later this month. Folks who played Gears of War: Ultimate Edition will get a first crack at the beta starting April 18, with the invitation expanding to all Xbox Live Gold members on April 25.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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First Look: Book Celebrates The ’Art of Atari’

Video game veterans who owned an Atari video game console are well aware of its biggest hits: Space Invaders, Asteroids, Combat. But a new book launching this fall pays tribute to the artwork used to sell these classics.

Dynamite Entertainment announced Friday it will release the book The Art of Atari, a 350-page retrospective ($39.99) digging into the history of the video game company through art work including marketing materials and classic box art.

"The box art up to this point has never really been represented with any sort of integrity or respect that it deserves," says

Robert V. Conte, a pop culture consultant and one of the co-authors of The Art of Atari.

The artwork was pulled together from museums and private collections, including Conte’s own stash of Atari games. Conte recalls getting an Atari 2600 for Christmas in 1980. His father, an appliance salesman, would barter with electronics companies, exchanging appliances for games to bolster Conte’s collection.

"Before you knew it, I had the most Atari games on the block," says Conte, who picks Space Invaders as his favorite piece of Atari box art.
The Art of Atari co-author Robert V. Conte poses with

Co-author Tim Lapetino, a graphic designer, says he started seriously working on the book after connecting with Cliff Spohn, an artist who worked with Atari on some of their game covers.

"Even though the graphics were so simple, the box art was really opening up this world," says Lapetino, who considers Super Breakout as his favorite piece of box art. "There was a bridge that was created from those really simple games."

Along with the artwork, The Art of Atari includes excerpts from artists sharing what went into the designs of some of Atari’s signature games. Ernest Cline, author of the hit book Ready Player One, wrote the book’s foreword.

Lapetino says one of the challenges was finding all the different Atari creations.

"Like a lot of companies back in the ’70s and ’80s, Atari wasn t really concerned about archival methods, or keeping this stuff," he says. "So the art some of it got destroyed, some of it was returned to the artists."

Conte says The Art of Atari will drive home the company’s importance in history beyond video games. "Now is an opportunity for pop culture and the American entertainment business to understand the importance of Atari s legacy and all the great stuff that came out of that."

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Consumers Deserve Stronger Online Privacy

On March 31st, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted Chairman Tom Wheeler s proposal to create new privacy rules for broadband Internet Service Providers (ISPs). This proposal,

while well-intended, has limitations that could adversely impact consumers.

The FCC s proposed rule making provides an opportunity for a wider, and yes, bolder approach - an approach that could admittedly take longer but could result in stronger consumer online protections. I have identified three overarching questions that should be part of such an approach. Failing to fully discuss these questions could create unintended downstream consequences confusing and conflicting, not complementary, consumer online privacy protections.

Some brief context. The proposal s genesis is the FCC s 2015 reclassification of broadband ISPs as telecommunications services. This change generated more FCC oversight and a decision that it needed to create specific privacy rules for the manner in which broadband-ISPs protect their customers online activities and information.

The questions I raise below are underscored by the Pew Research Center s January 2016 report (Privacy and Information Sharing; www.pewresearch.org)(Pew Report).

The Pew Report analyzed over two years of surveys from U.S. adults about their opinions about privacy and surveillance issues. What did they find? Briefly, that respondents want more control over their personal information; that they believe they ve lost control over the amount of their personal information collected and used by companies; and that current U.S. laws do not sufficiently protect their online privacy (Pew Report).

That brings me to the three overarching questions whose deliberation could promote enhanced consumer online privacy protections.

What kind of privacy framework would advance online consumer protections?

Such a framework would recognize the kinds of consumer concerns supported by the Pew Report s findings. Those concerns will only grow given the reality of the Internet of Things.

Why are those concerns important to crafting a robust privacy framework? Because it s likely that many consumers aren t thinking about whether they re connecting with their broadband ISP when logging onto the Internet. They log on, go to a website and start roaming from a particular business site then maybe to Facebook or Google or Amazon. It s no secret that companies and sites plan on expanding, not contracting, their consumer data collection since it s such a rich source for multiple commercial purposes.

The short answer: there should be consistent, across the board rules for collecting and using consumer data. More, not less, consumer control (opt in, not opt out) with no distinction between broadband-ISPs and non-broadband online entities.

Could the new FCC rules unintentionally create consumer confusion and coverage gaps?

First, the FCC s goal is stronger online consumer privacy

protections no one in the discussions to date has voiced a view other than supportive of this goal. That, however, begs the question of the extent of the potential problems.

And here s where the who s on first? scenario gets joined for consumers. The FCC s now greater broadband-ISP oversight means the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) no longer has its prior authority for broadband-ISP privacy issues. These jurisdictional distinctions might be understandable for policy makers and regulated entities but create unneeded consumer complexity.

The short answer: the new rules shouldn t create the possibility where consumers ping pong between the FCC and the FTC while trying to figure out which of them can answer a privacy problem. Or worse, the new FCC s increased privacy scope coupled with the FTC s decreased privacy scope could create a coverage gap a consumer problem which neither can address.

Finally, what would make the FCC s privacy rules stronger and advance consistent consumer online protections?

The FCC s new rules will address privacy protections for the means by which consumers access the Internt. A narrow focus on just the broadband-ISPs is short sighted given the multiplicity of devices consumers use and will be using.

The short answer: the U.S. already has specific privacy laws for categories of personal information (e.g., health, financial). The FTC s privacy principles are strong and established. So, at a minimum, the FCC should build off these existing privacy frameworks and not create entirely new rules that will create confusion and gaps.

Here s the bolder part of this answer: the FCC s authority should cover non-broadband ISPs the Googles, Amazons, Facebooks and future entities that will surely be forthcoming. Consumers want and deserve online protection. A piecemeal approach will not achieve that goal no matter how laudable the FCC s end goal.

Flash: Adobe Issues Emergency Update After Ransomware Attacks

Check your Web browser is running the latest version of Flash. And do it now.

Adobe has issued a global alert to computer users around the world warning of a serious security flaw that leaves machines open to ransomware attacks. The company is urging all users to update to the most recent version of the software, which it rolled out Thursday, as soon as possible.

Ransomware locks a user out of their machine until they pay a sum of money to the hacker behind the attack. A user s machine can be tricked into installing the malicious software after visiting an infected website.

Hackers are said to be using the Nuclear and Magnitude exploit kits to spread ransomware such as Cerber. DT reported on Cerber

last month, though researchers only recently discovered how a flaw in Flash can be used to deliver the ransomware, hence Adobe s response on Thursday.

Rather creepily, Cerber takes control of Windows text-to-speech engine to let a user know, out loud, that their computer has been hijacked. The message says, Attention! Attention! Attention! Your documents, photos, databases, and other files have been encrypted. In the case of Cerber, victims have reportedly been told to pay $500 to regain access to their files.

Adobe has in the last few hours posted information about cross-platform Flash updates that address critical vulnerabilities that could potentially allow an attacker to take control of the affected system. There s a lot of information on the page, but the main point is to ensure you have the latest version of Flash on your machine. You can do this by hitting this Adobe page via each of the browsers you use (updates may be auto-installing for one browser but not another) to make sure the software is up to date.

Ransomware is becoming an increasing problem for not only individual computer users, but businesses too, where the ransom demands are likely to be far higher. In February, for example, ransomware landed on the systems of a Hollywood hospital, locking staff out of computers holding important patient information as well as other data.

Hackers reportedly demanded $3.4 million to restore access. The hospital said it refused to pay such a large amount, though admitted it ended up handing over $17,000 in bitcoins to resolve the matter.

Edge Freezes Flash Content; Imitates Chrome and Safari

Microsoft yesterday said its Edge browser would follow in the footsteps of Google’s Chrome and Apple’s Safari by freezing some content rendered by Adobe’s Flash Player.

The new feature appeared in the edition of Edge packaged with Windows 10 Insider build 14316, which Microsoft issued Wednesday.

"With the Anniversary Update to Windows 10, Microsoft Edge will intelligently auto-pause content that is not central to the Web page," wrote John Hazen, an Edge program manager, in a post to a company blog today.

The behavior will be identical to what Chrome has done since September 2015, when it began to freeze peripheral-to-the-page Flash content in its "Stable" version. In fact, Hazen’s description was almost a word-for-word repeat of what Google engineer Tommy Li wrote last year.

Google, in turn, had copied Apple, which introduced Flash freeze in Safari 7, the browser bundled with 2013’s OS X Mavericks.

In both Chrome and Safari, users can click the Flash content to

activate it. Without a click, the content remains visible but static. Edge will work the same way.

As Google’s Li did in 2015, Hazen asserted that suppressing Flash auto-run content would reduce notebook battery consumption. He also said Microsoft was pressing for a future without Flash, long a crucial component of Web pages but so widely used that cyber criminals have rooted out scores of vulnerabilities to exploit. Adobe, for instance, yesterday released a patch for Flash to close a hole hackers had driven a new type of ransomware through.

"We are planning for and look forward to a future where Flash is no longer necessary as a default experience in Microsoft Edge," said Hazen.

Unlike Chrome, Edge will apparently not let users modify the browser’s default stance on Flash: Computerworld could not find an option in the browser’s settings panel to disable the auto-run blocking.

Nor did Hazen hazard comment on Microsoft’s more popular Internet Explorer (IE) browser, which will presumably not be retrofitted with the feature. Previously, Microsoft has said that active development of IE had been halted - although security flaws will be fixed - because the browser is meant as a legacy tool for running older Web apps and websites, primarily by corporate customers.

An updated Edge with the Flash-freeze feature will debut within the Windows 10 Anniversary Update, 2016’s sole upgrade, which Microsoft intends to release this summer.

Windows Insider participants assigned to the "Fast" release ring can try out Edge’s Flash blocking by running build 14136.

Watch Out For the Newest Email Scam: Almost-real Speeding Tickets

Some residents of the Philadelphia suburb Tredyffrin have reportedly been receiving emails notifying them of fictitious speeding tickets, and directing them to pay at a link that triggers a malware download.

So far, ho-hum, in our crazy cyberpunk futureworld. But there s a lot more going on here, because, according to Tredyffrin police, the targeted drivers were actually speeding at the places and times indicated in the emails they received.

Think about that for a second.

Investigators suspect that the detail-oriented masterminds of this plot hacked a GPS-enabled smartphone app to obtain the location data and find actual speeders to target. So far, according to Philadelphia Magazine, only three local residents have reported receiving the emails.

This raises all kinds of questions. Most email scamming is based on mass volume and low success rates, but it s hard to say how

scaleable something this precisely targeted could be. Maybe whoever s behind this is trying to invert the email scam paradigm, spooling exceptionally convincing bait out to a relative handful of people.

There may be one unanticipated roadblock to their plan, though Tredyffrin apparently doesn t have speed cameras, and real cops issue all citations in person. That could set off alarms for townies receiving the scam emails.

Tredyffrin police are also doing those targeted by the scam a big favor and not issuing them real tickets, despite their apparent confessions.

Vivaldi Web Browser Hits Version 1.0, Beats Chrome, Firefox in RAM Usages

Back in 1996, what began as a research project for Telenor, the largest Norweigan communications company in the world, evolved into a completely separate company, Opera Software. The company s Opera web browser became a cult favorite, and is particularly favored among privacy advocates.

Now one of Opera s original creators, Opera Software co-founder Jon von Tetzchner, is working with a team of browser building pioneers to launch Vivaldi 1.0, a new browser set on making web browsers powerful again, according to Tetzchner.

Vivaldi 1.0 adapts to you, not the other way around, he wrote in a press release sent to Digital Trends earlier today. We made Vivaldi the most customizable browser in existence, based on feedback provided by millions of users. In fact, there are more than one million different ways to make Vivaldi your perfect browser.

Vivaldi aims to achieve this by stacking its features, consisting of things expected from a web browser like Bookmarks and Downloads, in a condensed pile off to the left-hand side of the screen. There s even a space for notes, which could come in handy for students and researchers looking to save snippets of text or screenshots for use later on.

Though it feels a little gimmicky in practice, Vivaldi 1.0 also features mouse gestures letting you transfer a flick of the wrist into almost any action by holding down the right mouse key. This comes on top of more traditional keyboard shortcut support.

With the help of Chromium, which powers Vivaldi, not only does the browser perform smoothly at bringing up web pages, but it also takes up significantly less memory than Chrome, Firefox, and Safari.

In a direct comparison of all four browsers displaying only the Digital Trends homepage, Safari occupied the most RAM at 355.1MB, while Firefox and Chrome took up 254.7MB and 188.8MB, respectively. Meanwhile, Vivaldi only used 62.2MB when carrying

out the same task.

Millions of people have already agreed that they want a better browser, one that puts them in control, von Tetzchner continues. Everything we build is in service of the user. We have no investors and their agendas to dictate our progress. There s no exit strategy and we re here to stay. All we want is to give people a browser they re proud to use and that we re proud to call Vivaldi.

While we didn t expect much going in, after testing out Vivaldi for ourselves, we must say the only thing that didn t impress was Bing s position as the default search engine. Everything else was considerably cleaner, faster, and less consumptive than its big-time rivals.

Vivaldi s full release is now available for download at the browser s homepage.

Microsoft Tests $4-per-month Outlook Premium

Microsoft is testing a premium version of Outlook.com that removes the ads and supports custom domains for email addresses.

According to Brad Sams at Thurrott.com, Outlook Premium is free for one year and then costs $3.99 per month during the trial phase, though it s only available by invite for now. Microsoft first started experimenting with premium Outlook in February, but at the time it wasn t clear how much the service might cost.

The service appears to combine two features that Microsoft offers or has offered in the past. The first is an ad-free version of Outlook, which is already available today as a $20 per year upgrade. The second is custom domains, which allow users to enjoy Outlook.com s features but with a personalized email address (think yourname@example.com).

Users can already add custom domains in Outlook with an Office 365 Small Business Essentials subscription, which costs $6 per month or $60 per year. Until 2014, Microsoft also offered custom domains for free, but that system was also slightly different, in that users were responsible for procuring the domain. Under the new premium plans, Microsoft will manage that process itself.

For now, it s unclear whether non-business Office 365 subscribers will get premium Outlook features for free. Keep in mind that Microsoft could tweak the pricing or abandon the project entirely before rolling it out to the masses.

Why this matters: At least in the trial phase, Outlook Premium occupies a middle ground between ad-free Outlook and a full Office 365 subscription. It could also slightly undercut Google s Apps for Work plans, which support custom domains for $5 per user per month. This may have some appeal to individual users who are starting a business or otherwise want to have a custom email address without losing the features of a webmail

service.

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